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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5478  
INFO RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV 0019  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3565  
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA 1763  
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 3808  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 3422

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMGT](#) [ENRG](#) [BO](#)  
SUBJECT: MINSK EAC DISCUSSES POSSIBLE INTERRUPTION IN  
NATURAL GAS SUPPLIES

Classified By: Charge Jonathan Moore for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Charge convened post's Emergency Action Committee December 28. In attendance were A/DCM, A/POL/ECON chief, RSO, CONS, GSO, IMO, ITO, A/DCM, CLO, MSG DET Commander, USAID and A/PAO.

¶2. (SBU) The EAC met to discuss the continuing dispute and negotiations between Gazprom and the Government of Belarus (GOB) over terms of a new natural gas contract and review relevant EAP tripwires. Belarus receives 98% of its natural gas from Russia, and natural gas is critically important to both central electricity generation and the heating of many public and private buildings (including Embassy residences).

¶3. (SBU) As negotiations approach January 1, Gazprom's contractual deadline, rhetoric has been intense and Gazprom has implied that it will shut off gas supplies to Belarus effective 0900 January 1 Minsk time if an agreement is not reached.

¶4. (SBU) The EAC considered a number of factors: 1) the GOB has a reservoir of natural gas, and could also switch some electrical generation facilities to oil; 2) it appears likely that some gas will still be sent through Belarus, ostensibly for customers elsewhere in Europe; and 3) public sentiment makes it unlikely that a settlement would be delayed by more than a few days at the most. Based on those factors, EAC members concurred that the worst-case scenario -- a complete cessation in gas supplies to Belarus over one week or more -- is highly unlikely. EAC members agreed that in the event agreement is not reached before January 1, a more likely scenario would be a temporary (less than forty-eight hours) shut off followed by a compromise agreement between the parties and little or no disruption in public infrastructure.

¶5. (SBU) The EAC does not believe that Gazprom would complicate negotiations at this juncture by shutting off gas supplies prior to January 1.

¶6. (S) Post's EAP tripwires for authorized and ordered departure due to sustained or long-term disruptions in energy supplies do not compel post to take any type of draw down measures at this time:

¶A. Growing potential for draw down

- Anticipated long-term disruption of utilities, gas, water, goods and services (including means of communication) which outstrips the embassy's ability to ameliorate conditions for embassy staff.

#### 1B. Authorized Departure

- Security situation or fuel shortages result in a significant decrease in the number of available commercial flights out of country.
- Public services (gas, electric, water, telephone, food, public sanitation, etc.) experience severe disruptions routinely, without expectation that normal service will resume.
- Food and gasoline supplies become sporadic.
- Any sustained disruption of water, food, electricity, communications, transportation, and emergency services and other public safety organs.

#### 1C. Ordered Departure

- Comprehensive breakdown of critical infrastructure and/or utilities, due to natural or man-made incident, to such an extent that the Embassy can no longer sustain operations.

17. (SBU) Post will report further details of the negotiations septel, and will reassess the potential for severe disruptions in energy supplies immediately after the New Year.

Moore